



TOPIC 03: Gender Identity Dysphoria

Selected

T03.S.01

Transsexualism in a sexology unit: a two year sample

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Over the last years “transgender” reality has been acquiring a progressive social and cultural relevance. Transsexualism is a Gender Identity Disorder in which there is strong and ongoing cross gender identification.

The purpose of the present work is to provide a better knowledge about transsexual condition in what concerns clinical features, assessment and effective model of treatment.

The authors analyzed a sample of 15 transsexual cases, followed during the last two years in a Sexology Unit at Coimbra University Hospital, Portugal. A description of the clinical approach used in this population of transsexuals is presented based on an assessment protocol, focused and considering the whole process of sexual reassignments. They analyzed several parameters (sexual orientation, birth order, digit ratio, family co occurrence) that seem to provide, according present literature, possible clues regarding origins and genesis of the condition.

It is concluded that evaluation and treatment of these cases is complex, as there is not a single model of intervention, but a variety of possible procedures, techniques and tools that are a result of ongoing discussion and contribution of different areas of knowledge. The findings reinforce the importance of multidisciplinary health care teams and prolonged psychotherapy programs in the management of Transsexualism, in a way that individual and specific needs are met.

T03.S.02

Efficacy of project respect in reducing sexual risk behaviours of male to female transgenders in Iran

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Objective: The purpose of the present study was to determine the efficacy of project RESPECT in reducing sexual risk behaviours of male to female transgenders.

Design and Method: This study was an interventional, quasi-experimental and case-control. 30 transgenders, male to female, which had sexual risk behaviours were selected and divided into experimental and control groups. Transgenders in experimental group received 4 - session intervention conducted one session per week and individually, but control group received no intervention. The instruments of this research were Demographic and Sexual Risk Questionnaires. Data were analyzed by independent t-test, chi square and percent differences.

Results: Although frequency of sexual risk behaviours didn't changed significantly in experimental group, higher sexual risk behaviors were reduced significantly ($p=0.01$).

Conclusion: Project RESPECT was more effective in reducing higher sexual risk behaviors than frequency of sexual risk behaviours of male to female transgenders.

T03.S.03

The management of gender identity discordance in the sexual therapy clinic of Lisbon's Psychiatric Hospital Centre (H. Julio de Matos)

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The Authors review the management procedures applied to Gender Identity Discordance (GID).

Drawing upon the data of 75 patients assessed, sociodemographic and individual characteristics are outlined. The results of personality tests, genetic evaluation and hormone therapy are discussed.

The outcome in psychological and social adaptation, post sex reassignment surgery, is considered. Finally, suggestions are made for the improvement of current management procedures of GID in Portugal.

Oral presentations

T03.O.01

Personality and psychopathology in gender identity disorder: a comparison between Rorschach and Shedler-Westen Assessment Procedure

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Objective: Gender Identity Disorder (G.I.D.) is a syndrome that represents the most serious form of gender identity related disorders. The etiology is still unknown and it creates some basic diagnostic and therapeutic problems to the health care providers. Up to now no specific diagnostic tools were found for G.I.D. diagnosis so we thought useful to investigate the personality organization and cognitive functioning of G.I.D. patients. The aim of this paper is to investigate the presence of psychopathological signs at Rorschach test and SWAP in a G.I.D. sample

Design and methods: Our sample is composed of 30 patients attending to a Public and a Private Health Service who entered the program for Sex Reassignment Surgery. This paper intends to analyze 30 Rorschach protocols according to Exner Rorschach Comprehensive System and data from SWAP of G.I.D. subjects requesting Gender Reassignment Surgery. The study examines the thought and the personality organization of G.I.D. patients comparing these two internal measures.

Results: Firstly, the authors will show findings about G.I.D. personality organization in terms of indices identified in Rorschach and SWAP. Secondly Rorschach and SWAP-200 results will be compared in order to evaluate to which extent different personality measures might agree or disagree on diagnostic conclusions. Our data might suggest however some hypotheses on the personality organization of GID subjects.

Conclusions: Our results indicate no clear-cut psychopathology with the Rorschach, thus suggesting GID is an independent condition unrelated to psychopathology and calling into question its inclusion in mental health disorders.

T03.O.02

Gender identity disorder: a study on defence mechanisms and alexithymia

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Objective: This research was aimed to explore the difficulty of MtF transsexual people to experience the psychological path not only like an obligatory step with a control function,

in other words as a "simple" assessment of the legitimacy of their demand to access to the subsequent phases of the medical and surgical procedures, but also like a place to share their real emotional pain.

Design and method: We have administered REM-71 for the analysis of the unconscious defence mechanisms and TAS-20 for the analysis of the alexithymia to 40 adult MtF GID people. The different variables were compared using Student T Test to the available normative data.

Results: REM-71 showed a widespread elevation of 19 defence mechanisms on 21 and also an elevation of 3 clustered factors on 4 ($p=0.01$).

TAS-20 showed a significant higher scores ($p=0.037$) of the factor 3, the one linked to the cognitive style oriented to the external reality.

Conclusions: The different approach of MtF DIG people to the psychological path could be linked both to the widespread use of defence mechanisms and to the significant presence of the alexithymic factor (factor 3) linked to rational thinking and to the difficulty in accessing a deeper dimension of the personality.

T03.O.03

Gender identity disforia parenting: theoretical and clinical considerations about working with parents of GID adolescents

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Objective: Theoretical and clinical considerations coming from clinical work with parents of GID adolescents, mainly males from 15 to 18 years old, are expressed in this paper. During last years the demand of this type of clinical intervention has increased. More and more parents have asked for it as their sons have declared their wish of living and behaving in society as females.

Design and method: Parents are offered a cycle of 4 clinical sessions with a psychologist, during which they are helped to explore both internal and external dynamics so as feelings and thoughts as these characterize the emotional dimension of their parenthood. In a parallel setting the adolescent is offered a cycle of 4 clinical sessions with a different psychologist. Sometime a psychotherapy is indicated and offered.

Results: Working with these subjects means working on their capacity of accepting their son and his choice of living as a member of the other gender. The clinical intervention with parents gives the opportunity to explore the complex emotional dimension of the shame of having a son which is very different to the one expected.

Conclusions: Working with parents exploring issues as the story of their parenthood with that child (even pregnancy and the post-partum period), the story of the couple, how the role of the mother and father have been considered in that family, may help to obtain further understandings about GID.

T03.O.04

Transgender and transsexual identities: identity development in gender-variant persons

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Objectives: This paper presents the ongoing work of a PhD project based in the Lisbon University Institute - ISCTE. The study addresses the development of identities in gender-variant persons, especially transsexual persons. The purpose of the study is to contribute to the knowledge of a population that has been marginalized (also) by the academic community, and to understand the role that context (from the close ones, like family or associative participation, to the more extensive ones, as the State itself) play in the construction of transgender identity. We intend to understand, in particular, how the current forms of psychiatry action, together with the Portuguese law on the legal change of sex, influence the construction of the identity of transgender people.

Design and method: Taking into account the scarcity of studies about this theme and the difficulty of access to transgender people, the present study utilizes a qualitative methodological approach, involving the use of in-depth interviews with transsexual persons.

Results: The preliminary results of this research will be presented. The results will be discussed in the context of the literature and current debate of identity politics.

Conclusions: With this study we aim to contribute to the understanding of the issues surrounding gender identity in Portuguese context, and in addition help the development of a more effective, ethical and culturally sensitive clinical practice.

T03.O.05

Attachment styles in mtf adult GID people: a possible explanation for their difficulty in accessing the psychological help

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Objective: Some preliminary results obtained by our team on a small sample (n=18) demonstrated, a significant increase in Insecure Attachment Styles, as well as a significant increase of Unresolved conditions related to traumas or losses among MtF GID adult people. We hypothesized that this could explain the resistance to psychotherapeutic treatment usually observed. In order to confirm these data and support this hypothesis we evaluated the attachment styles in a wider MtF GID adult sample.

Design and method: A new non-probabilistic sample of 35 M to F GID people was recruited in "Federico II" University Hospital of Naples. We administered the Adult Attachment Interview, coded by two independent psychologists. The

results were compared, using Fisher's exact test, to the available normative data.

Results: The GID sample in comparison with the normative data showed a lower percentage of F and E styles and a higher percentage of Ds styles. The GID sample showed also a higher percentage of the U/d conditions ($p < 0.05$).

Conclusions: Regarding the attachment styles our sample shows -confirming our hypothesis- a significant prevalence of Ds styles. At the same time the need of psychological help is confirmed by the higher percentage of U/d conditions. The results lead us not only to reflect on the necessity of such intervention but also to provide a better definition of their significance.

T03.O.06

Female transsexualism and counter-transference dynamics: a qualitative research on the relationship between FTM and women psychologists

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Objective: This paper aims to analyse the psycho-social aspects of female transsexualism by means of a qualitative analysis. Moreover it highlights counter-transference dynamics belonging to the relationship with this specific group of clients.

Design and method: The method chosen for the research consists of an in-depth non-structured interview. The study was carried out on eighteen Female to Male Italian transsexual subjects. The subjects were selected by means of snowball sampling. The study consisted in:

1. a descriptive analysis of the interviews using the "discovery and awareness of the transsexual condition" as the investigative focus with the description of the various stages that belong to transsexual and transgender condition (Devor H., 2004);
2. a written report through which psychologists involved in the clinical setting/relationship express their own experience, discussed within a supervision group.

Results: The results highlight a correlation between the choice to undergo transition and the specific psychic experiences of female transsexualism. Psychologists (women) involved in the clinical relationship tell about feelings, related to female body and gender belonging, that need to be elaborated in supervision settings to become elements of enrichment.

Conclusions: from the analysis of both interviews and clinical reports, it comes out the female typical traits "denial" and the impossibility to live in a female body that lead FTM subjects to the sex change choice. These issues strictly impact on a clinical relationship with a woman psychologist that should draw on her counter-transference world to widen her way to interact with these clients.

Posters

T03.P.01

What make us male or female? Is there room for a third category?

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Objective: Gender is a social construction that yields power over every individual in our society. When a male-to-female transgender needs hospitalization a lot of gender concerns are raised such as: where does the patient sleeps - men or women ward? May he still dress as a woman? How do we address him - by the birth name, or the female name he prefers?

Design and method: We present a case report of a 26-year-old female-identified natal male admitted with a sudden psychotic disorder due to psychoactive substance use (F19.5, CID10) to a busy acute inpatient ward at Hospital Magalhães Lemos, Porto. At the admission, the patient presented in feminine clothing (short skirt, high heels, long hair and makeup), agitated, confused, with delusions of persecution, auditory and olfactory hallucinations. This patient has a history of strong and persistent cross-dressing activity and a persistent discomfort in the male gender role. He has come out as a homosexual at the age of 16. He's been working in the sex industry. He didn't want to apply for genital surgery, but he was taking feminizing hormonal therapy without medical prescription.

Conclusions: The traditional dichotomous gender paradigm is oppressive, especially for transgendered people whose sense of themselves as gendered people is incongruent with the gender they were assigned at birth. There are many limitations of Knowledge in this area, and we hope that some of the uncertainties will be resolved in the future through scientific investigation.